

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 19 are pending herein.

By this Amendment, claims 1-4, 7-10 and 12 are amended to remove reference numbers therein and claims 13-18 are canceled. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) was filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 19, 2002. However, the Patent Office has failed to acknowledge as having considered the references cited in the February 19, 2002 IDS. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to acknowledge as having considered the references cited on the February 19, 2002 IDS Form PTO-1449 by initialing each reference cited therein and returning the executed form to applicants. As a courtesy to the Examiner, a copy of the February 19, 2002 IDS Form PTO-1449 is enclosed.

II. Claim for Priority

Applicants filed a claim for foreign priority in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 19, 2002. Applicants also filed a certified copy of each of the foreign applications (Japanese application no. 2001-074355 filed March 15, 2001 and Japanese application no. 2001-090529 filed on March 27, 2002) in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 19, 2002. Attached is a copy of the stamped receipt for filing the certified copies of the priority documents.

Applicants respectfully request the Patent Office to acknowledge the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or (f) and to acknowledge that all the certified copies of the foreign priority documents have been received.

III. Ex Parte Quayle

The Patent Office indicated that claims 13-18 have been canceled. In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on February 23, the Examiner clarified that claims 13-18 have not yet been canceled. The Examiner stated that claims 1-12 and 19 are allowable and that he would issue a Notice of Allowance after non-elected claims 13-18 have been canceled. To this end, Applicants herein cancel claims 13-18. Applicants submit the requirements of the Patent Office have been met.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-12 and 19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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